

WHEN DID WE FORGET WHAT OUR GRANDPARENTS TAUGHT US?



I'm a third-generation Irish American raised catholic in a predominantly republican household. Less government control of the citizens is best for our country, allowing all to succeed based on their effort to learn needed skills

to provide solutions that people and businesses would pay to utilize. However, even with this past republican philosophy, it was unfortunately observed government regulation was needed to protect us all from each other and corporate greed while protecting the environment we all occupy.

My Grandfather literally fought for worker rights as a discriminated-against first-generation Irishman at the turn of the last century. He eventually became a construction foreman in NY city and then relocated to Detroit, lived simply, sacrificed luxury items to earn and save enough to help his two sons through college.

He was a proud Irish American, never forgetting his heritage and always grateful for the opportunity and freedom his new country afforded him and his family. My Grandmother was German, and I learned to respect and admire the German people's logical discipline and work ethic. And she, too, was always grateful for the new life they could build in their new country. She was a proud, forceful woman who, according to my dad, ruled with iron first and backhand!

They often, as grandparents do, make it clear you never forget your roots, but we must also be grateful as an American you have the right to be involved with the direction your life, you're learning, your town, and your country take.

These rights, however, are contingent upon whether the opportunity is available to you. We must recognize and remember not everyone is treated equally, no matter what we hope. It is your obligation as a citizen, Catholic, and an American to help take care of your family, friends, church, community, and country. We must make sure we all respect each other, strive to ensure all are treated equally, and follow the Constitution and the laws we create together based on the democratic majority. We, the people, oversee our destiny and the good we can accomplish here and worldwide for all.

My Grandmother was more religious and was my Grandfather's moral compass and often stressed we all must be kind to others, always respect our elders (Hmmm) and live by the golden rule:

"Do unto others

as you would have them do unto you."

Jesus of Nazareth

I forgot this until we taught my children at our church about various religions and that all major religions have a golden rule (go figure). I wrote them down, printed them out onto wallet-sized cards, and gave them to my children, friends, and our church, all very similar.

I get annoyed now when I hear many religious leaders and friends speak negatively about others and supposed Christians call others derogatory names. They forgot what their grandparents and their spiritual teachings taught them. How did we get here (pandemic, inaccurate media, bigotry, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, bad religious teachers, financial inequalities, laziness, or just forgetfulness) ??

Can you imagine a wonderful world where religious people lived by their religion's golden rule and used their power to help others understand their position rather than condemn those less fortunate or different from themselves?

I was very fortunate to have multiple opportunities to learn many lessons from my Grandparents and have learned that many people have not had the chance, and maybe you can learn from mine. I remember a few lessons I hopefully won't have to repeat, such as when my grandma was "loudly" (never yelling, respectful women don't yell!) discussing an issue about my Grandfather's behavior across the dinner table. He looked her right in the eye and slowly removed his hearing aid, laying it out on the table in front of him! I also observed how even two people I love and look to for guidance and significantly respected slowly forgot the golden rule and succumbed to forgetfulness.

The most important rule I learned from both my Grandparents was how to evaluate the integrity of someone, possibly a life partner, a new friend, a business associate, a customer, and/or possible politician you will support. Confirming what type of person they are - leads us back to the golden rule.

Are they:

Respectful to "all" others, not just direct peers,
or constituents?

Trustworthy?

Kind?

Moral?

What values do they honor?

Grateful for what they have?

Compassionate?

Generous, not only with their finances but with
time, kindness, and knowledge?

It's not always easy to see through someone's persona, but you are obligated to yourself and your family to spend the time to see the natural person. Evaluate their friends, business associates, businesses they work for, association memberships, what they believe in, seeking information from various sources, not just one. Do they represent your value system, would you want them to be your child's friend or business associate, or would you invite them into your home?

This work is required, and we need to spend a little more time properly evaluating the person, not just agreeing with a few topics we have in common. Could you rely on this person if you need help? Only after this more in-depth evaluation should you consider befriending, working with, supporting, and/or voting for this person.

Living by a "golden rule" is what I believe we have forgotten from our grandparents; how to align ourselves with only those who are worthy of our respect, support, time, and money. Do they have similar values to us?

Let's take our country back by insisting that politicians meet the moral requirements that made this great country, those who live by a "golden rule," not one they made up. We don't have to settle for anyone we would not trust, like friends or business associates. These revisited moral grounds will create an environment where good, better people will run for office. Candidates who we are proud of supporting, not just accepting, "well they were the lesser of 2 evils." Let's help those who do not; seek office to become millionaires and vote for special personal medical insurance and retirement plans outside what's available to the public. Let's vote for those who want term limits, which would minimize the graft because of the "lobbying" system that the incumbents have created.

Let's, please, recall what our grandparents taught us, and we can earn back the right to direct our country with the values we believe in and hold those accountable who don't live up to these higher moral, legal, and professional expectations.

Let's tactfully remind each other of the golden rule, so we too don't forget it, as preposterous negative media campaigns bombard us.

Thanks, Jim O'Connor